

**Jamestown  
Journal  
Of  
Samuel  
Collier**

### **August 1606 London, England**

What am I to do? Father is gone, I'm living in one of the largest cities in the world, and I can't find a job. There is talk of a new adventure, though. I'm thinking of joining the Virginia Company of London which is organizing a journey to Virginia to start a new colony. Perhaps they can use me.

### **November 1606**

Success! Today I encountered Captain John Smith. Fortunate am I that I can read and write for he can make use of me as a page, or secretary on the journey to Virginia. We are to sail in December.

### **December 20, 1606**

I left for Virginia today along with 104 settlers and 39 sailors. We are traveling in three ships- the Susan Constant, Godspeed, and Discovery. Captain Smith and I are on the Susan Constant. Our adventure begins!

### **April 26, 1607 Virginia**

About 4:00 this morning I was awakened by the cry of the watch- Land! Virginia! Four and a half months at sea in these cramped quarters have caused much quarreling among the men and it seems like we have been at sea forever. Following the winds and the currents, we sailed first to the Canary Islands and then on to the West Indies for a stop to rest and forget the difficulties of the past weeks. Now we have finally arrived! We built a small boat called a shallop to explore the Bay of the Chesapeake. I can already see a white sandy beach and tall pines. What a welcome sight! The air is mild and the river beyond the bay looks broader than any I have seen in England. We named this river the James, in honor of our King, James I.

### **May 13, 1607 Jamestown**

After exploring up and down the river, we found a place 30 miles from the bay to settle. Choosing a site so far from the bay will make it hard for our enemies, the Spanish, to find and attack us. The piece of land we selected is almost an island, and once we build our fort we should also be safe if the Indians decide to attack.

### **June 1607**

We've been cutting down trees during the past weeks to clear the land and build our fort. The fort is shaped like a triangle with high towers, called bulwarks, at each corner where we will mount our cannons from the ships. There has been much to do finishing the fort, building our shelter, planting food, and exploring our new home. It is unfortunate that the Virginia Company sent over so many "gentlemen" who do not work with their hands. Many of them would rather look for gold.

The other day my friend, Jim Brumfield, was killed by the Powhatan Indians. We can't seem to understand how to get along with them. I wonder if peace is possible between people so different.

Captain Newport has returned to England for more supplies. It will be three or four months before he returns. I wonder what will happen to us by then.

### **September 1607**

These past months have been most hot and humid. Men are dying daily from cruel diseases and hunger. We still don't have the skills to hunt, catch, or grow enough food so we are forced to eat the wormy food left from our voyage. Captain Smith had me write to the Virginia Company that "even though there are fish in the sea, birds in the air, and animals in the woods, we are so weak and ignorant that we cannot catch much." The water here is bad, too. We should have listened to Captain Smith and dug freshwater wells instead of drinking from the river which is salty. Half our numbers are dead-over 50 souls. We all would have died if the Powhatan Indians hadn't brought us bread, corn, fish, and meat in great plenty. What miseries. How I long for the comforts of home in England.

### **May 13, 1608**

Jamestown in one year old today! It was an awful winter. Captain Newport finally arrived in January with more settlers and new supplies. Good thing because our fort burned after his arrival and we needed all the help we could get to rebuild it.

We are having both successes and failures visiting and trading with the Indians. They've helped us at times by giving us food, showing us how to plant corn, and hunt for game. But, there are tribes who are unfriendly and some of our men have been killed. Unfortunately, there are also many in our group who are cruel to the Indians and some of them have been killed. So, some days we're friends and some days we're enemies and back and forth it goes.

### **December 1608**

Captain John Smith took over the leadership at Jamestown a few months ago. He is tired of a government where only a few do the work to feed the whole settlement. Because of this, Captain Smith has ordered everyone to work and says "he who will not work, will not eat." Now buildings are being repaired and more corn is being grown. It is a good thing too, because the first two English women arrived about three months ago and it looks as though Jamestown will soon have its first wedding. I have heard that one of our carpenters, John Laydon has already asked young Anne Burras to marry him.

### **March/April 1609**

Captain Smith has taken me with him on two of his trips to visit Indian Villages along the James River. During the last trip, Captain Smith ordered me to spend some time in a village with one of the local werowances—that's what they call their chiefs. He told me to learn their language and to record a few of their words. While I was there, I tried to learn as much as I could and listed a few words such as *moccasins* (shoes) and *tomahacks* (axes). I also saw a beast that looked like a badger but lives in the trees like squirrels they named *aroughcun* (raccoon). What an adventure!

### **October 1609**

Nearly four hundred new settlers arrived a few weeks ago but many of them are sick. Most of the food and supplies they were carrying on their ships were destroyed by a storm at sea. We were counting on that food to help us through the winter. To make matters worse, Captain Smith was injured by a gunpowder explosion on a recent expedition and returned to England for treatment. He was a good friend and I miss him already.

### **June 1610**

I guess I am one of the lucky ones, if that is what you call those of us who survived the cruel winter known as the "starving time." So many have died of hunger and disease, including some of my friends. It was worse than the plagues we have had in London that killed so many. Fortunately, a fleet of ships just arrived full of food and supplies to help us start again. It looks like Jamestown might make it after all.